

STATEMENT OF
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before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS, HEALTH CARE AND TRADE
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

on

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

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Chairman Gonzalez, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I appreciate your inviting me to discuss our efforts to improve the overall diversity of the Federal workforce. I welcome the opportunity to discuss with you our efforts to build and sustain the most effective Federal civilian workforce possible. We have long recognized that reaching the broadest possible pool of applicants for Federal jobs is essential to meeting this goal.

Of course, our efforts in this regard are conducted within the framework of the merit system principles. We must ensure that all Americans have equal access to Federal employment opportunities at all levels of the workforce, and that their knowledge, skills, and abilities are evaluated fairly. Our efforts to build the most effective corps of senior executives still depend, in part, on ensuring an effective pipeline into the Senior Executive Service. Many of our efforts are aimed at supporting agencies' development of future leaders through leadership training and succession planning programs.

I would like to highlight for you the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) vigorous efforts to promote Federal employment expansively, including in areas where the potential applicant pool is very diverse. One of the techniques we use to accomplish this is conducting job fairs and Federal career days at colleges and universities, and we often target schools that are likely to help us establish a pipeline of diverse and highly-qualified individuals. For example, two of the four Federal career days OPM sponsored last fall took place at the University of New Mexico and New Mexico State University. These are two of the nation's leading Hispanic-serving institutions. Earlier this year, OPM supported career fairs at Alabama State University and the Tuskegee Institute, two historically-black institutions.

We also continue to target community colleges because of their strong ties to their local communities and their potential for providing a diverse applicant pool. For example, we

conducted a Federal career day last year at Northern Virginia Community College, one of the Nation's largest and most diverse community colleges, with students representing over 150 nationalities.

As part of our effort to cast the widest possible net, OPM also launched a television ad campaign to spark interest in Federal employment. We aired these ads in targeted markets where we believe there is likely to be an ample supply of individuals who have the qualifications, skills, and experience the Federal Government needs in its workforce. We have seen a consistent spike in visits to our USAJOBS web site after the ads have aired. The ads have had a strong impact in raising awareness of, and generating interest in, the array of important and rewarding careers in the Federal Government. In addition to helping recruit new talent, the ads have showcased the impressive variety of public services provided by Federal employees every day. The series of ads, entitled "What Did You Do at Your Job Today?," have been aired in 17 markets, including El Paso and Waco, Texas; Las Cruces, New Mexico; Champaign, Illinois; Raleigh, North Carolina; Biloxi and Gulfport, Mississippi; Greenville and Spartanburg, South Carolina; Rochester, New York; Pittsburgh; Kansas City; Spokane, Washington; and other cities. The ads feature Federal employees drawn from a wide variety of professions and agencies.

In addition to those television ads, OPM later held a unique webcast called the Virtual National Career Services Conference. The purpose of this initiative, conducted in cooperation with the Partnership for Public Service, was to introduce college and university career services professionals, and their students, to information about Federal job opportunities. Again, we expect that these measures to promote Federal employment to targeted audiences will also contribute to our effort to create the strongest possible pipeline for future leadership positions.

These recruitment initiatives are complemented by succession planning, which remains an essential component of developing and nurturing a strong senior executive corps. This is all the more important because of the increasing numbers of employees who are reaching retirement eligibility. Since last summer, OPM has been re-validating all checkmarks on the Human Capital Scorecard, including those for leadership succession and for diversity. Based on results so far, we are confident that agencies are engaging in significant efforts to institutionalize effective leadership succession strategies.

Federal agencies often include SES candidate development programs (CDP) in the leadership succession strategies they are required to implement. During the period between January 2000 and July 2007, there were 953 graduates of agency SES candidate development programs, and 623 of these were placed in the SES. Our data clearly show that these programs are proving to be an excellent vehicle for minority entry into the SES. During this same 7-year period, 27 percent of the individuals placed in SES positions after graduating from OPM-approved agency SES candidate development programs were minorities. This compares to the 15 percent of the total current SES population (as of July 2007) identified as minorities. Similarly, 39 percent of the graduates of these candidate development programs who were placed in the SES during the same period

were women, compared to the overall female representation in the SES, which stood at 28 percent as of last July.

Mr. Chairman, let me take a brief moment to also address the latest Governmentwide data on minority representation in the Federal Government. OPM is required to report to Congress annually on minority representation in the Federal Government in relation to the overall Civilian Labor Force. Our most recent report was submitted to the Congress, and to your subcommittee, in January. The report shows that the Federal Government continues to compare favorably to the Civilian Labor Force in employing minorities, with the exception of Hispanics. The Federal Government is also slightly behind the non-Federal sector in the employment of women.

In conclusion, I want to assure you that OPM shares your goal of a Federal workforce that is effective in large part because it draws on the strengths that a broad and diverse applicant pool offers. This will continue to be our goal with respect to developing and recruiting senior executives, as well as the rest of the Federal civilian workforce.

I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.